

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1988
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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4505

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, WA, SF
SUBJECT: SAG INTENTIONS ON EVE OF THE AHTISAARI VISIT

1. SUMMARY: ON THE EVE OF AHTISAARI'S VISIT TO WINDHOEK, THE SAG HAS ASSUMED A RELATIVELY RETRAINED POSTURE, PROJECTING NEITHER OPTIMISM NOR PESSIMISM OVER THE SUCCESS OF THE MISSION. THE SAG MAY BELIEVE THAT THEIR OUTRAGE OVER THE WALVIS BAY RESOLUTION AND THEIR ASSERTION OF A VETO OVER AHTISAARI'S REPORT WILL GIVE THEM A SOMEWHAT MORE ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION IN THE INITIAL DISCUSSIONS. THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS THE SOUTH AFRICANS CAN BE EXPECTED TO EMPLOY EVERY DEVICE TO INFLUENCE THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN THEIR FAVOR. DURING THE SURVEY TEAM MISSION, FOR EXAMPLE, THE AG IS LIKELY TO PUSH FOR A DISCUSSION OF
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SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE LAST FEW DAYS, THE SAG HAS BEEN RELATIVELY RESTRAINED ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR AHTISAARI'S TRIP, PROJECTING NEITHER OPTIMISM NOR PESSIMISM. VORSTER IN HIS AUGUST 1 TV INTERVIEW (PRETORIA 4431), BRUSHED OVER THE WALVIS BAY ISSUE AND DID NOT SUGGEST FAILURE, ALTHOUGH

HE TALKED OF THE POSSIBILITY. IN A SPEECH TO PRETORIA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, WHICH FOCUSED ON FUTURE RELATIONS WITH AFRICA (REPORTED BY AIRGRAM), HE DID NOT MENTION THE SUBJECT OF NAMIBIA. EDITORIALS IN THE AFRIKAANS PRESS HAVE LIKEWISE NOT SOUGHT TO PREJUDGE THE OUTCOME OF AHTISAARI'S TRIP. JUDGE STEYN'S ONLY REPORTED COMMENT IN RECENT DAYS HAS BEEN TO WELCOME AHTISAARI'S IMMIENT ARRIVAL AND TO STRESS THE MUTUAL GOAL OF ESTALBISHING A RELATIONSHIP OF TRUS AND COOPERATION.

3. ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE NATIONALIST SOURCE, THERE HAS BEEN CONFUSION AND DISMAY AT THE GRASS ROOTS LEVEL ABOUT THE RECENT COURSE OF EVENTS AND THE PARTY'S INFORMATION DEPARTMENT IS CONDUCTING LOCAL BRIEFINGS ON THE NAMIBIAN SITUATION. WE DO NOT KNOWN THE GIST OF THESE BRIEFINGS BUT ASSUME THAT THEIR MAIN TAKS IS TO EXPLAIN WHY, IN THE FACE OF THE "DOUBLE CROSS" ON WALVISY BAY AND THE RENEWED QUESTIONING OF WESTERN INTENTIONS BY SAG LEADERS, THE PROCESS STILL SEEMS TO BE MOVING AHEAD TOWARD A UN OPERATION.

4. VORSTER VERY LIKELY NOW BELIEVES THAT HIS VIGOROUS AND CATEGORICAL REACTION TO THE WALVIS BAY RESOLUTION HAS MINIMIZED TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE THE PERCEIVED DAMAGE DONE TO SOUTH AFRICA'S INTEREST ON THIS ISSUE AND MAINTAINED THE GOVERNMENT'S IMAGE AT HOME. THE SAG IS CONFIDENTIAL

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ALSO EXPLOITING THE WALVIS BAY ISSUE TO PLAY THE AGGRIEVED PARTY AND TO EMPLOY WHATEVER LEVERAGE THIS MAY GIVE THEM TO ACHIEVE AS FAVORABLE AND INTERPRETATION AS POSSIBLE OF THE PROPOSAL. THEY MAY BELIEVE THAT THEIR OUTRAGE OVER THE WALVIS BAY RESOLUTION AND THEIR ASSERTION OF A VETO RIGHT OVER AHTISAARI'S REPORT WILL GIVE THEM A SOMEWHAT MORE ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION IN THE INITIAL DISCUSSIONS.

5. THE SAG CAN BE EXPECTED TO EMPLOY EVERY DEVICE TO INFLUENCE THE COURSE OF EVENTS--STEP BY STEP--IN ITS FAVOR. WE WILL HAVE TO RECKON WITH THE EVIDENT DIVISIONS IN THE SAG WHICH WILL REQUIRE THOSE PREPARED TO PURSUE THE WESTERN PROPOSAL TO SATISFY THEIR OPPONENTS THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERESTS ARE BEING SCRUPULOUSLY PROTECTED. HOW SERIOUSLY THE SOUTH AFRICANS CONTEMPLATE THE POSSIBILITY OF WITHDRAWAL OF THEIR COOPERATION, SHOULD EVENTS NOT EVOLVE TO THEIR LIKING, WE DO NOT KNOW, BUT THEY WILL USE THE THREAT EXPLICITLY OR IMPLICITLY THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS. THEY WILL SEEK TO DISCREDIT SWAPO ALL ALONG THE WAY, ATTEMPT TO MOBILIZE SYMPATHETIC PRESSURE ON THE FIVE, AND WILL BE QUICK TO TAKE UP ANY MOVE WHICH

CAN CONCEIVABLY BE CHARACTERIZED AS BRINGING INTO QUESTION
THE IMPARTIALITY OF AHTISAARI AND THE UN.

6. WE WHOLEHARTEDLY AGREE WITH THE CONTACT GROUP VIEW
THAT AHTISAARI'S WINDHOEK MISSION SHOULD LIMIT ITSELF
AS STRICTLY AS POSSIBLE TO INFORMATION GATHERING AND
AVOID DIALOGUE WITH AG STEYN ON THE SUBSTANCE OF
IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSAL (USUN 3096). AHTISAARI AND
HIS TEAM WILL BE UNDER VERY HEAVY PRESSURE BOTH PUBLICLY
AND PRIVATELY TO DISCUSS SUBSTANCE. ANY SUCH DISCUSSION
WILL SURELY AROUSE CONTROVERSY, POISON THE ATMOSPHERE,
AND THE TAKING OF NON-NEGOTIABLE POSITIONS BY THE SAG
EVEN BEFORE AHTISAARI HAS COMPLETED HIS SURVEY AND MADE
HIS REPORTS TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL.
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